

"Good God! what have I done?" was his mental exclamation, as he leaned against the rail. "A murderer! a murderer!—or, at least, as bad as one!"

Jealousy no longer worried him. He felt that, could he but see the lieutenant alive and well before him, he would not care how soon he married Mabel.

For what was the torment of disappointed love he had previously felt to the anguish he now experienced?

Herbert was lost—probably lost for ever, and Simon felt that it was his fault—that he might have saved him had he so wished.

It was a terrible thought, and the mate thought he would never muster courage to breathe it to a living soul—that he must for ever keep the dark secret locked in his breast.

Walking forward to make sure that he was the only person who had seen the accident, he was soon reassured on this point.

The look-out had not yet been posted, and there was not a man on deck here, the whole watch having stolen into the fore-castle to play cards.

As to the man of the helm aft, he was an old sailor, who, besides being near-sighted, was so deaf that it was necessary to yell an order into his ears for him to hear it.

The lieutenant was not missed until next day.

The vessel was searched for and aft, but of course he could not be discovered, and it added to Simon's torture to behold the grief of the captain's daughter.

Pale as death she tottered into the cabin.

Her wild sobs smote on the heart of the mate.

That Herbert had fallen overboard unobserved during the night, was the natural verdict of the crew.

The mast-heads were manned, and keen eyes scanned the vast expanse of ocean.

But nothing was visible except a sail far away, off the weather-quarter.

"Lost!" cried the captain. "We shall never see him again."

And as the fearful words struck on Mabel's ear, down in the cabin, she shrieked, and fell senseless into her father's arms.

For weeks afterwards she lay on her couch, in a burning fever.

Though by the time the "Frolic" reached Japan, she had recovered from it, yet the crew could hardly realize that this pale, wasted girl was the once lively, blooming young Mabel.

As to the mate, a prey to but one feeling—remorse—he left the ship, and wandered recklessly into the interior of Japan, not caring what became of him.

Hunger, however, compelled him, in a week, to retrace his way towards the sea-coast.

He was already in sight of his vessel and also of the frigate, anchored not far from the other, when he was attacked by three Malay thieves, who, with drawn knives, sprang towards him, probably to rob him of the clothes he wore.

Seizing the arm of the foremost one, he knocked him down.

Then, being unable to cope with the others, he took to his heels.

He had nearly gained the coast when his foot slipped, and falling, he would have been cut to pieces by the Malays but for a young naval officer, who, emerging from behind a rock, near the sea shore, boldly advanced, pointing a revolver at the rascals.

They ran off, when, turning to thank his deliverer, Simon, to his astonishment, recognized Herbert Martin.

"Mr. Clayton, mate of the 'Frolic,'" said Herbert, "I am glad we meet, as I have some questions to ask you."

"First, however, let me explain that I saved myself on that night I fell off your ship, by means of an overturned canoe, which I had previously seen, and which, fortunately, as I had thought, had drifted near."

"I was picked up the same night by a brig, bound to Japan, and I reached port nearly a week ago."

"Now, then, I would ask you why you did not have a boat lowered for me after I fell overboard, or why you did not throw me a rope?"

"Because I was a villain," answered Simon, "and hated and felt jealous of the man who has just saved my life."

Frankly, in a few words, he explained all.

"But what I did," he went on, "cured my love—my jealousy for ever. I had no room after that for any feeling but remorse."

When he had concluded, the lieutenant held out his hand.

"You did wrong—did what I could not have done under the same circumstances—but I forgive you."

"And my seeing you alive and well," said the mate, "has made a happy man of me again."

"What will you say, and how feel, when I tell you that Mabel and I will soon be married?" added Herbert.

"I am glad of it," answered Simon, in a voice which betokened his sincerity.

The lieutenant, whose boat with its crew was near to the beach, now took the mate to his ship.

A few weeks after he was present at the wedding of happy Mabel with the lieutenant.

And not a man present was now happier than he, for, as he had said, his love and jealousy had both been cured by remorse.

UNVEILED.

"Poor thing! I do feel for her. Though she is a person I never saw, yet hers seems a case of such oppression on the one hand, and such patient suffering on the other, that one cannot but—"

"Oh, I dare say you'll see her in the morning, for she often steals out then, when the wretch, I suppose, is in bed."

"But what could have induced a girl to tie herself to such a man?"

"Well, I don't know—the old story, I suppose—false appearance; for no girl in her senses would have married a man with his habits if she had known of them beforehand."

"There is sometimes a kind of infatuation about women, I allow, which seems to blind them to the real character of the man they are in love with; but in this case I don't think she could have known how he conducted himself, or she certainly would have paused in time. Oh, the wretch! I have no patience with him."

This little dialogue took place in one of those neat, bright, clean-windowed, gauzy-curtained houses that form so many pretty districts within a walking distance of the mighty heart of the great metropolis, and between two ladies, the one mistress of the said nice-looking cottage villa, and the other her guest—a country matron, who had just arrived on a visit to her town friend: and the object of the commiseration of both was the occupant of a handsomer villa exactly opposite, but apparently the abode of great wretchedness.

On the following morning Mrs. Barton and her guest, Mrs. Kennedy, were at the window of the parlor, which commanded a full view of the dwelling of the unhappy Mrs. Morton, when the hall-door was quietly opened, and was as quietly shut again by the lady herself.

"There she is, poor thing!" cried Mrs. Barton. "Only look how carefully and noiselessly she draws the gate after her. She seems always afraid that the slightest noise she makes, even in the street, may wake that fellow, who is now, I dare say, sleeping off the effects of last night's dissipation."

Mrs. Kennedy, with all the genial warmth of a truly womanly heart, looked over, and followed with her eyes, as far as the street allowed this quiet-looking, broken-spirited wife, investigating the whole figure, from the neatly-trimmed straw bonnet to the tips of the bright little boots, with a most intense and mysterious sympathy; and then, fixing her anxious, interested gaze on the opposite house, she said—

"And how do they live? How do people under such circumstances pass the day? It is a thing I cannot comprehend, for, were Kennedy to act in such a way, I'm sure I wouldn't endure it for a week."

"It does seem scarcely intelligible," answered Mrs. Barton; "but I'll tell you how they appear to do. She gets up and has her breakfast by herself; for, without any wish to pry, we can see straight through their house from front to back. About this time she often comes out—I suppose to pay a visit or two in the neighborhood, or perhaps to call on her tradespeople; and you will see her by-and-by return, looking up as she approaches at the bed-room window, and, if the blind is drawn up, she rushes in, thinking, I dare say, to herself, 'How angry he will be if he comes down and finds I am not there to give him his breakfast!' Sometimes he has his breakfast at twelve—or one—or two; and I have seen him sitting down to it when she was having her dinner!"

"And when does he have his dinner?"

"Oh—his dinner! I dare say that is a different sort of thing from hers, poor thing! He dines, no doubt, at a club, or with his boon companions, or anywhere, in fact, but at home."

"And when does he come home generally?"

"At all hours. We hear him open the little gate with his key at three, four, and five in the morning. Indeed, our milkman told Susan that he has seen him sneaking in, pale, haggard, and worn out with his horrid vigils, at the hour decent people are seated at breakfast."

"I wonder if she waits up for him?"

"Oh, no; for we see the light of her solitary candle in her room always as we are going to bed, and you may be sure my heart bleeds for her—poor solitary soul! I don't know that I was ever so interested about any stranger as I am about this young creature."

"Dear, dear; it is terrible!" sighed the sympathizing Mrs. Kennedy. "But does any one visit them—have they any friends, do you think?"

"I don't think he can have many friends—the heartless fellow; but there are a great many people who call, stylish people too, in carriages; and there is he—the wretch!—often with his half-sleepy look, smiling and handing the ladies out as if he were the most exemplary husband in the world."

"Has she children? I hope she has, as they would console her in his long absences."

"No—even that comfort is denied her. She has no one to cheer her—her own thoughts must be her companions at such times. But perhaps it is a blessing; for what kind of father could such a man make? Oh, I should like to know her! And yet I dread any acquaintance with her husband. Barton, you know, wouldn't know such a man."

"My dear Mary, you have made me quite melancholy. Let us go out. You know I have much to see, and many people to call upon;

and here we are, losing the best part of the day in something not much removed from scandal."

The ladies hereupon set out, saw all the "loves of bonnets" in Regent Street, all the "sacrifices" that were being voluntarily offered up in Oxford Street, bought a great many things for "less than half the original cost," made calls, and laughed and chatted away a pleasant, exciting day for the country lady, who, happily for herself, forgot in the bustle the drooping, crest-fallen bird who was fretting itself away in its pretty cage in Morton Road.

The next day a lady friend called on Mrs. Barton.

"I find," she said, in the course of conversation with that lady and her guest, "you are a near neighbor of a dear friend of mine, Mrs. Morton."

"Mrs. Morton!" exclaimed both her hearers, pale with excitement and curiosity. "Mrs. Morton! Oh, how singular that you should know her—poor, miserable creature! Oh, do tell us about—"

"Poor—miserable! What can you mean? You mistake. My Mrs. Morton is the happiest little woman in London."

"Oh, it cannot be the same!" said Mrs. Barton. "I mean our opposite neighbor, in Hawthorn Villa. I thought it couldn't be—"

"Hawthorn Villa. The very house! You surely cannot have seen her or her husband, who—"

"Oh, the dreadful, wretched, gambling fellow!" interrupted Mrs. Barton. "I wouldn't know such a man."

"He," in her turn interrupted her friend, Mrs. Law—"he a gambler! He is the most exemplary young man in London—a pattern of every domestic virtue—kind, gentle, amiable, and passionately fond of his young wife!"

"My dear Mrs. Law, how can you say all this of a man whose conduct is the common talk of the neighborhood—a man lost to every sense of shame, I should suppose—who comes home to his desolate wife at all hours, whose only ostensible means of living is gambling, or something equally disreputable—who—"

"You have been most grievously misled," again interposed Mrs. Law. "Who can have so grossly slandered the best of men? He cannot help his late hours, poor fellow! That may be safely called his misfortune, but not his fault! And the lady warmed as she spoke till she had to untie her bonnet, and fan her glowing face with her handkerchief.

"His misfortune," murmured Mrs. Barton; "how can that be called a misfortune which a man can help any day he pleases?"

"But he cannot help it; he would be too pleased to spend his evenings at home with his dear little wife, but you know his business begins when other people's is over."

"Then what, in Heaven's name, is his business?"

"Don't you know?" said Mrs. Law, looking extremely surprised. "Why, he's the editor of a morning newspaper!"

A MOST HORRIBLE SECRET.

"Don't come near me, Adolphus!" wailed a voice from beneath a coverlet on the sofa. "Oh, oh, my head aches so at the least noise! Go away, please."

"Go away!" he echoed, in amazement. "Is it my own darling Adeline that bids me leave her? Impossible! What! leave my wife while she is ill? Am I so heartless as that? Never—the gods forbid! I will send for a doctor—for two of them! Cruel death shall not rob me of my darling!"

"Adolphus, Adolphus," whimpered the treble voice again, "do be calm! I am in no danger. It is only an attack of the nervous headache, and I wish to be quiet a few hours. Please go away and leave me."

"Impossible!" came the response. "You might die—I should be insane with anxiety. I will sit right down here quietly and protect your slumbers."

A tremendous sigh from beneath the coverlet was all the response the faithful husband received, and that alarmed him still more.

"Adolphus, would you do something for me?" the invalid questioned, a moment later.

"Anything, my dove! Ask the half of my kingdom!"

"I have heard that down at 'Cologne & Soda Waters' they keep a medicine that is a sure cure for the headache. Would you go after it yourself? If you send anyone else I shall be afraid to take it, for fear they have made some mistake."

"I will go as if on the wings of the wind," he returned. "Oh, Adeline, don't exert yourself while I am gone! Be calm—sleep if you can, and recover to bless me with your smile once more!"

The moment the anxious husband disappeared, the sick wife sprang from her couch and called the attentive chambermaid, who had attended her the night before. She whispered into her ear her secret grief, and the girl smiled and nodded, and then rushed out.

"I will not be gone five minutes," she said; "it's just round the corner."

The wife gave a sigh of relief, and took out her tiny watch—Adolphus' present—and counted the seconds as they passed by.

Only yesterday she was made a happy bride, and left the paternal mansion with blessings heaped upon her head. Adolphus, the man of

her choice, was every way worthy of her, and they had started on their bridal tour in serene happiness. But now what a change had come over the spirit of her dreams! She was the most miserable of women—the most heartbroken of her sex.

A few moments later she heard footsteps, and retreated to her lair in deadly fear that it was the bridegroom approaching. But no, it was the chambermaid and a gentleman.

The gentleman stayed but a short time, and talked very fast, and then backed out with a profusion of thanks for remembrance, and assurances of instant relief.

A moment elapsed—no, not more than thirty seconds—when Adolphus, unseen and unheard, entered the room. Adeline gave a little feminine shriek, and cowered closer into her coverlet on the couch. Adolphus' brow grew dark as midnight.

"Who was it that left this room?" he demanded.

"No one," she faltered—false woman that she was—"you must have made a mistake. It was next door."

"False creature!" he cried, dashing the medicine to the floor. "What means this falsehood? I watched him come out of the door—the door to your room, madam! What am I to understand? You send me away, you refuse to have me near you—me, your lawful husband, woman—and then you admit that vile wretch! What does it mean, abandoned creature?"

"Oh! oh!" wailed the bride; "don't—don't talk so to me, Adolphus, my jewel! You will kill me—you will!"

"And you will kill me," he retorted. "You have blasted my faith in the name of woman—you have broken my heart, trampled upon my affections, and everything most sacred!"

"Stop, stop, I implore you, and leave me! Only an hour, Adolphus, and then I will explain all. He's coming back. Oh, do go!"

"Never! never!" he shouted, striking an attitude that Keen could worthily have copied for some high-tragedy scene—"never! But, yes, vile creature, I will leave you in a few moments! I will go and plunge myself in the river and drown my grief! I'll commit suicide! I'll not allow the bright sun to shine upon and mock my woe!"

"Oh, Adolphus, if you only would be calm?" she whimpered.

"Calm? calm? My blood is on fire! No, woman; calmness is no more for me! I am mad—I am ruined! The temple of my mind has given away—I feel it crumbling from its very base! I will sail forth and buy a pistol. I will not shoot myself, and leave you false woman, to glory in your shame; but I will first doom you to death, right before the eyes of your paramour, and then a faithful bullet shall lay me low, while the four winds of heaven take up the story of your base treachery and spread it far and wide!"

He flung his hands up toward high heaven, and started for the door, nerved to despatch.

She sprang from her couch, with a large white knitted night-cap upon her head and grasped his arm.

"Oh, don't—don't go!" she shrieked. "I did wrong to keep a secret from you! I—"

"A most horrible secret, woman!" he retorted. "Free me! Your grasp contaminates!"

At that moment there was a sound of approaching footsteps, and then the chambermaid opened the door and ushered in a gentleman.

"I beg a thousand pardons!" he simpered. "I knew not that monsieur was in."

"Vile man!" and Adolphus struggled to reach him. "How—how—"

"It was so unfortunate that madame should lose her hair," he went on, "the most beautiful hair in the world! Try this on, madame, and see if it is not most charming!"

"What—what?" questioned Adolphus.

"Your lady meets with one misfortune. While she sleeps something steals her hair away. She is ashamed, she feels mortification, and she sends for me to bring her some more."

Adolphus sunk down upon a couch, overcome by the sudden revulsion of his feelings, while Adeline and the chambermaid repaired to another apartment.

A moment more, and Adeline came sailing in, smiling and happy. Her hair suited her to a charm. She thrust the money into the hair-dresser's hand and then, as he closed the door behind him, glided toward Adolphus.

"Adolphus, forgive me!" she pleaded. "I lost my hair, and I—I—have had to wear a wig. Something stole it while I slept, last night, and this morning I was mad upon the discovery. It was a horrible secret to keep from you, but I—I thought you would not love me, if you knew my hair was false."

Then Adolphus lifted up his voice.

"I have been a brute, a miserable brute! And yet I am happy now," he cried. "Come to my arms, Adeline!" and he embraced her. "I will never doubt you again!"

His grief at her apparent falseness had so broken him down that he forgot how often he had reviled women for wearing false hair, and vowed that, if ever it was his misfortune to be tied to such a creature, he would find refuge in the Divorce Court. He forgot everything save that Adeline was his, and that she was not the perfidious wretch he had imagined.

Five minutes later they were the most loving couple in the world; and only the tame monkey outside knew where the missing blonde locks of the lady were hid, or what fearful consequences nearly occurred from his exposure of her most horrible secret.